



REASON & REVELATION

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The **DATE** of the **EXODUS**: Does it **MATTER**?

Part 1

IS **"God
Did It"**
A GOOD
RESPONSE?

**TRANSLATED
MATERIALS
MAKING**

A WORLD OF
DIFFERENCE

The Date of the Exodus:

What Does the Bible Say and Why Does it Matter? (Part I)

Jonathan Moore, Ph.D.

Article In Brief..



Many scholars argue that the Exodus of the Bible never occurred. Among those who believe it did occur, scholars are divided about when it happened: “early” (1447/1446 B.C.) or “late” (ca. 1250 B.C.). A straightforward assessment of the textual evidence in Scripture leads to the early date of the Exodus, but some scholars believe the archaeological evidence does not support an early date. Instead, they argue it supports a late date of the Exodus and, subsequently, interpret key Bible passages in a way that supports the late date. A re-examination of the available evidence reveals that an early Exodus date is still not only tenable—it is preferable.

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BACKGROUND

UNTIL the 1960s, the discussion concerning the date of the Exodus was a battle between the critical, textual studies of the Bible and archaeological studies.¹ Today, however, most

scholars question the historicity of the Exodus, the Conquest, and even the existence of Moses. The minimalist school claims that the final biblical text was written in the Hellenistic period, only 700 years after the time of David and Solomon, and therefore, they claim the biblical history of the Exodus and subsequent Conquest are purely literary.²

Constant speculative, historical reconstruction of the Exodus event seems to be ever present even among Jewish scholars. A front-page story in *The Los Angeles Times* reports an interview with a Jewish rabbi who said, “The truth is, that virtually every modern archaeologist who has investigated the story of the Exodus, with very few exceptions, agrees that the way the Bible describes the Exodus is not the way it happened, if it happened at all.”³

The data in archaeological surveys of recent decades have not been

disputed in the sense of the existence of sites, the dating of pottery, etc. But the interpretations have changed regarding several questions, e.g., dating of material finds, ethnicity of inhabitants, and continuity and discontinuity between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age. There remains a deep division between the post-modern, rationalist-critical reading of the biblical text and the traditional grammatical-historical reading of the text.

When it comes to the historicity of the Exodus, the stakes could not be higher, and skeptics and liberal scholars alike know this all too well. If the people, places, and events of the Exodus are not historical but, instead, are legend, then the trustworthiness of biblical revelation is seriously undermined.

EARLY VS. LATE-DATE EXODUS

IS the evidence against the biblical dating so muddled that one should throw out all attempts to identify the date of the Exodus? Historical matters are seldom simple. While the material culture at these sites illuminates the biblical text, it often raises more questions than it settles.

As of this writing, even among those scholars who hold to a historical Exodus, there is no consensus concerning its exact timing. However, most biblical scholars and experts generally agree that the Exodus account is framed within Egypt’s “New Kingdom” period (ca. 1570-1040 B.C.), immediately prior to the period of Israel’s monarchy. This window of time encompasses the entire period of the Exodus, Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness, and the period of the judges. Considering that the Torah is replete with references, phraseology, and language like that of the New Kingdom era, this chronology fits well with the events surrounding the biblical Exodus.⁴

Most proponents of the early date of the Exodus hold that the biblical and archaeological data indicate it happened during the 18th Egyptian Dynasty in the 15th century B.C., about 1447/46 B.C. (Late Bronze Age I B).⁵ Late-date advocates maintain that the archaeological record holds little to no evidence of a Conquest at the end of the 15th century B.C. Proponents of the late date believe the data discovered so far indicate the Exodus happened in the 13th century B.C., sometime around 1250 B.C. in the 19th Dynasty, 20 years or so into the reign of Pharaoh Rameses II (1279-1213 B.C.). Essentially, late-date advocates give preference to archaeological findings while early-date proponents trust the accuracy of the Hebrew Bible (HB) first and foremost.⁶

While modern scholarship remains skeptical about the whole prospect of writing a history of anything, much less a history of Israel, some believe that history emerges from a particular perception of reality (usually that of educated, upper-class male scribes) that may not be in line with contemporary concerns of the underclasses, ethnic minorities, or feminist groups. As a result, these skeptics often view a religious document (though it contains verifiable historical information) as unreliable. According to some, the Bible should not be trusted as a spiritual manuscript as it proliferates a “privileged point of view” rather than representing fairly the real situation of all concerned parties.⁷

While many scholars are inclined to attribute the destructions of Jericho, Ai, and Hazor to a myriad of different invaders,⁸ written historical records (HB) plainly attribute those destructions to Israel. It is my contention that the history recorded in the HB corresponds extremely well with the material evidence. The growing inclination among some that archaeology is more reliably

“scientific,” in contrast to the biblical texts which constitute unreliable historic data, blatantly disregards that Christianity is a historical faith based on actual events recorded in a historical document. William Brown summarizes this view of Israel’s history:

On the one hand, Israel’s story is no imaginative construct severed from the harsh realities of historical experience. The Bible is about a particular people who embodied a particular history. For all its ambiguity, archaeology anchors Israel’s story in history. Moreover, the archaeological picture underscores the social and theological struggles the ancient community faced as it developed those traditions that came to comprise scripture. On the other hand, Israel’s history cannot be severed from Israel’s faith in the God who delivered, sustained, and constituted Israel as a people.⁹

The germane question is, “Can written sources and archaeological remnants together establish the historicity of the Exodus?” Scott Stripling affirms this when he writes: “It is critical that we assign proper weight to these written sources and the material remains. Proper epistemology enables reliable historiography...the written text is less subjective than human interpretations of the material culture, and therefore it ought to receive primacy in our considerations.”¹⁰

Though archaeology can and does play a key role in biblical studies and Christian apologetics, we must keep in mind the limits of archaeology. Archaeology can confirm, enlighten, and illuminate, but it cannot prove the divine inspiration of the Bible. While archaeologists study and interpret the evidence left behind by those who inhabited and destroyed biblical sites, how the evidence is understood and applied depends on the interpreter’s presuppositions and

worldview. There was a time when minimalist scholars famously questioned the existence of King David, that is, until 1993 with the discovery of the “House of David” inscription at Tel Dan. Likewise, although many ground their arguments in the absence of evidence regarding the Exodus event, the ancient Egyptians almost never recorded events which portrayed them unfavorably, so one should not expect to find an engraving or a statue bearing the name “Moses” or a monument depicting the 10 plagues.

Despite the challenges in interpreting the biblical and archaeological material together, an ever-growing body of evidence demonstrates localized destruction of prominent Canaanite cities at the Late Bronze Age I B-II A horizon consistent with a ca. 1446 B.C. Exodus and a ca. 1406 B.C. Conquest.

METHODOLOGY

THE logical beginning for those examining the historicity of the biblical Exodus is the text itself. Though the biblical evidence seems clear, it should also be considered in light of the archaeological evidence. For our purposes, we will first examine the chronological clues as presented in the biblical text. From a methodological standpoint, I will be approaching the biblical text in the following manner as adapted from Walter Kaiser, Jr. and Paul Wegner:¹¹

1. History CAN include the unique, the miraculous, and the intervention of the divine.
2. History CAN include anything that does not have external documentation.
3. History CAN include narratives about individuals, but most focus on nations instead.¹²
4. History CAN focus on individuals as shapers of the times, not only upon the sociological factors that influence historical change.

5. Historical writing CAN give logical and necessary priority to written evidence over material culture.

While archaeology, oftentimes working under the false guise of “science,” is valuable for helping us to understand the material culture behind the text, Scripture remains the primary source of authority. One must not elevate archaeology to the point that it becomes the judge for the validity of Scripture. Randall Price emphasizes this point:

There are indeed instances where the information needed to resolve a historical or chronological question is lacking from both archaeology and the Bible, but it is unwarranted to assume the material evidence taken from the more limited content of archaeological excavations can be used to dispute the literary evidence from the more complete content of the canonical scriptures.¹³

Although I believe that strong archaeological evidence exists to support the early date, the most powerful case for an early date Exodus begins with Scripture. Stripling expresses this concept perfectly when he says, “Archaeological excavation, properly conducted, illuminates the written word of God, and vice versa, but if the two **appear** to conflict, early-date advocates defer to the biblical text.”¹⁴

THE BIBLICAL TEXTS

1 Kings 6:1

The most literal interpretation of the biblical sources begins with the date given for the building of Solomon’s Temple in 1 Kings 6:1: “Now it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel...he began to build the house of the Lord.” Several Assyrian artifacts from specific periods mention Israelite and Judean kings, allowing one

to date Solomon’s reign precisely. Those artifacts include a reference to Ahab on the Kurkh Monolith at the time of the ca. 853 B.C. Battle of Qarqar and a reference to Jehu on the Black Obelisk, paying tribute in ca. 841 B.C.¹⁵ Using internal biblical data and archaeology, Edwin Thiele was able to apply these regnal counting methods to create a timeline for the reign of Solomon, aligning his fourth year referenced in 1 Kings 6:1 with 967 B.C.¹⁶ Basic addition then places the Exodus around 1446 B.C. and the Conquest around 1406 B.C. This date also accords well with extrabiblical evidence to be discussed in a later article.¹⁷

The 480-year timeframe as conveyed in 1 Kings 6 comports well with other biblical evidence. Robert Boling has totaled “the first 4 years of Solomon’s rule, the 42 regnal years of Saul and David, the 136 years from Tola to Eli, the 200 years of peace under the saviors, the 53 years of oppression, and the 45 years implied in Josh 14:1. The total is 480.”¹⁸ Paul Ray,¹⁹ Andrew Steinmann,²⁰ and others, upon examining the chronology of Judges, have determined that 480 years concisely fits the span of time found within the text. Advocates for a 13th century Conquest, on the other hand, have not been able to explain convincingly the chronology in Judges.

Late-date adherents have more mathematical work to do to explain their chronology in light of the biblical record. Unambiguously, neither 480 nor 440²¹ fits with a 13th-century Exodus and, as a result, for late-date proponents, this number represents a symbolic number not to be interpreted literally. James Hoffmeier and Ralph Hawkins identify two possible options that late-date advocates propose for explaining the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 in their shorter timeframe. The first is that the 480 years constitute what

Assyriologists call a *Distanzangaben*, a given distance, or an approximation relating to the distant past. Hoffmeier argues that Assyrian rulers cite large numbers, like 720 years, between the founding of a temple or temple renovations and some important past event.²²

The second option, which is the chief argument for advocates of a late Exodus during the 13th (or even 12th) century, is that the “480 years” of 1 Kings 6:1 is a symbolic generational number. They hypothesize that the author of 1 Kings was referring to 12 idealized generations of 40 years when he arrived at the number 480. Both 12 and 40 are some of the most significant and oft-repeated numbers in the Bible. Nevertheless, Wood and Young have this to say about this convention:

Some numbers in the Bible clearly are not to be taken in a strictly literal sense (the “seventy times seven” of Matt 18:22, for example). The context and literary convention being followed are usually plain enough in such cases, however, to show that a non-literal interpretation is intended. For 1 Kgs 6:1, similarly, the context and literary convention being followed dictate that the 480 years must be taken as literal in intention. There is no indication that ancient readers would have understood it in any other sense. To treat it as other than literal would open the door to the radical revisionism that no interpreter with a high view of the inspiration of Scripture could accept: the forty years of Israel in the desert would not be literal, nor the forty days of the temptation of Jesus, nor his three days in the tomb, and so on without end, so that we would no longer be able to understand the plain meaning of any factual statement in Scripture.²³

Although there are no passages in the Bible directly communicat-

ing that 40 years is the ideal or full generation, scholars such as David van Daalen²⁴ often use the following passages to support their argument that a generation is equivalent to 40 years: Exodus 16:35; Numbers 14:33; 32:13; Ezekiel 4:6; 29:11; Deuteronomy 2:14; Psalm 95:10; and Hebrews 3:9-10. For example, Numbers 32:13 states: “And the Lord’s anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was gone.” Although the passage does not state that a generation equated 40 years of time, late-date proponents infer a connection. However, it is more likely that the 40 years referred to in Numbers 32:13 are the allotted amount of time needed for the generation (except those under 20) to die.

The word for generation in Numbers 32:13 is *dōr* (דֹּר) in Hebrew and *genea* (γενεά) in Greek. *Dōr* does not indicate the passage of time between the birth of a father and son in these verses concerning 40 years, though it is used as such in some other passages. Even if such a meaning was attempted here, it would not fit the context of the events since technically two generations died in the wilderness (parents and their children older than 20). Another interpretation for *dōr* is “contemporaries.” In Genesis 6:9, Noah was righteous among his *dōr*. The writer of Hebrews refers to the *genea* that tempted God in the wilderness (Hebrews 3:10), and Matthew notes the *genea* that sought a sign (Matthew 12:39). These examples connect to a group of people, not a time period.

Hoffmeier observes that the connection may have been formed by such passages as Joshua 5:6, “For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the nation, the men of war that came forth

out of Egypt, perished,” or Psalm 95:10, “For forty years I loathed that generation.”²⁵ Yet, neither of these passages explicitly equate the length of a generation with 40 years. More likely, over time, the number 40, which was undoubtedly a significant number for the Israelites, came to mean a long period of time.

The problem with associating 40 years to a generation is the lack of precedents or clear examples of such an interpretation within the Bible. It can be soundly argued that this false association constitutes a derived assumption to fit with the theory, an approach on par with circular reasoning. Ronald Hendel, a secular Jewish scholar, remarks:

[The 480 years] is unambiguous biblical testimony for the date of the exodus. Yet distinguished evangelical scholars will fiddle with this date, since it does not correspond with what archaeological and historical evidence tells us about the time of Israel’s emergence... In my view, this concession to historical and archaeological evidence is admirable. But it is also a departure from the plain sense of the Bible.... Identifying the Bible’s errors and replacing them with historically plausible reconstructions is a curious strategy for evangelical scholars. It clearly departs from the traditional doctrine of inerrancy.²⁶

Even if the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 is symbolic, connecting monumentally important stages of time in Israel’s history, it in no way demands or suggests that it should not also be taken literally. Artificially reducing this number to create verisimilitude with highly debatable and, oftentimes, conflicting archaeological evidence seems unnecessary and harmful to the biblical text.²⁷ Stripling aptly notes that with “this approach to dating, late-date advocates would have us believe that the biblical writer was either confused or practicing hyperbole. I find both of these unlikely.”²⁸

Overall, the 12 generations interpretation of the 1 Kings passage requires a great deal of mathematical sleuthing and hoop-jumping to understand a number that does not suggest a secret meaning. If the 1 Kings writer had intended to express a different amount of time or convey the passage of time in terms of generations, it would certainly have been simple and logical for him to state the allotted time in a different way, rather than utilize a coded system not outlined elsewhere. The purpose of 1 Kings is to record the history of the Israelites, an aim that generally favors clarity over mystery. Thus, the intention of 1 Kings 6:1 is plainly stated—to describe that 480 years had passed between the Exodus and the build-

(cont. on p. 8)

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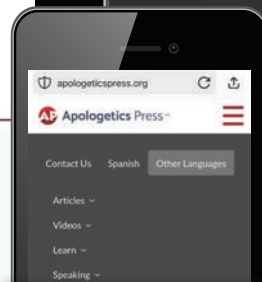
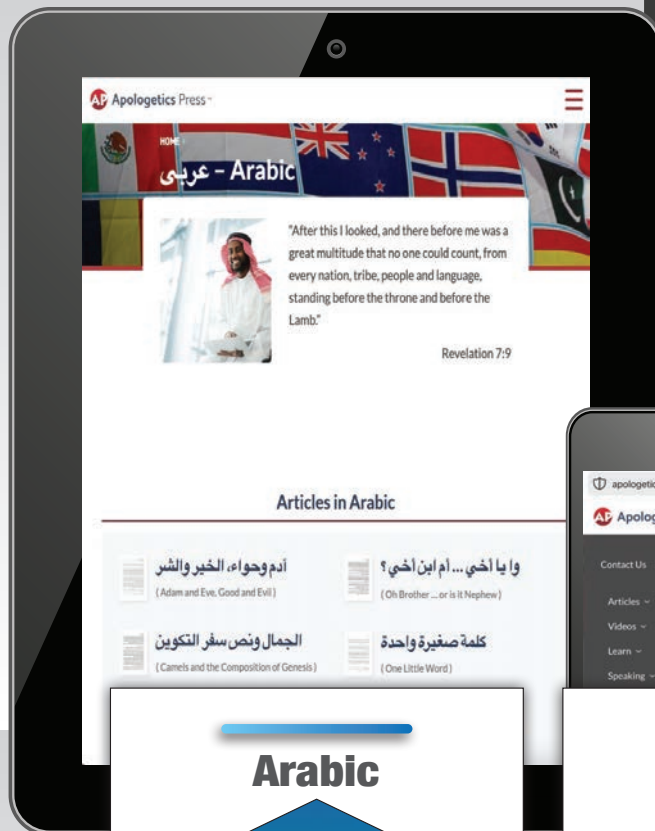
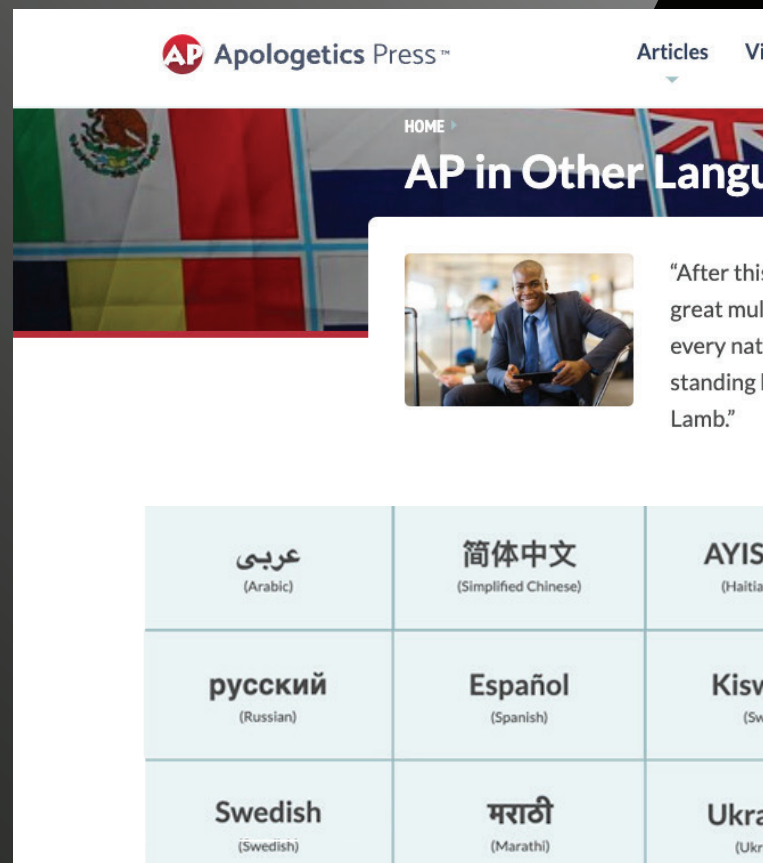
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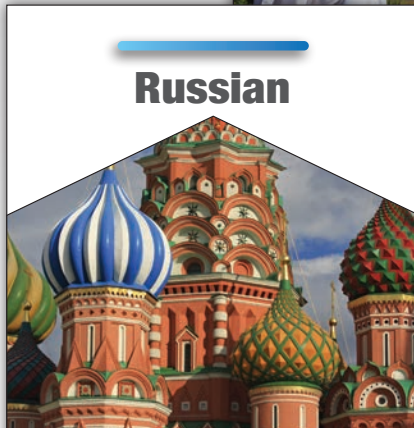
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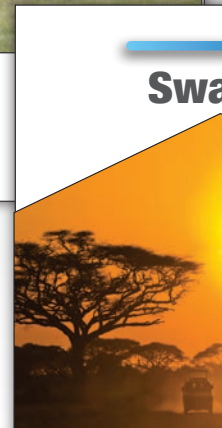
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s I looked, and there before me was a
titude that no one could count, from
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before the throne and before the


Revelation 7:9

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no santifiquen a Cristo como Señor en sus
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ustedes. Pero *háganlo* con mansedumbre y
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ing of the first Temple. Sadly, too many scholars have missed or muddled the simplicity of this passage.

Exodus 12:40 and the Hyksos

There is considerable debate surrounding Exodus 12:40 and the actual length of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt. While this topic is too broad to cover extensively in this article, it is important to note that there is a textual variant that exists in Exodus 12:40 between the Hebrew Masoretic text and the Greek Septuagint (LXX). The Masoretic text is a reliable, more recent Hebrew text (9th century A.D.) while the LXX is an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (ca. 250-150 B.C.). The difference between the two traditions is italicized below:

Masoretic (Hebrew text):

40 Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.

41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

Septuagint (Ancient Greek text):

40 Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in the land of Egypt *and in the land of Canaan* was four hundred and thirty years.

41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

Combining this verse in Exodus to Paul's parallel statement in Galatians 3:16-18, Paul seems to lend support to the LXX reading of the text as he denotes the 430 years of sojourning beginning with the promise given to Abraham (in

Canaan). Those who advocate for the 430 years of Exodus 12 to have started in Canaan with Abraham (in support of the LXX and Galatians 3:17) would allow for only 215 actual years of Israelite sojourn in Egypt (short sojourn), with the other 215 years representing the sojourn in Canaan. Advocates of the long Egyptian sojourn take the time from Joseph and his brothers in Egypt until the Exodus to be 430 years and then add extra time to go back to the Promise of Abraham (well over 600 years). While the Hebrew Masoretic text has demonstrated reliability despite its more recent transmission, the omission of "the land of Canaan" in this verse seems to be inconsistent with Galatians 3:17 and creates problems elsewhere in the text, including Genesis 15:15-16. While both long and short sojourn advocates can arrive at a 15th century Exodus (which we support), the short sojourn comports better with Galatians 3:17²⁹ along with a considerable amount of extrabiblical evidence including Josephus.³⁰ Furthermore, taking into account Exodus 1:8 regarding the rise of a king "who knew not Joseph," this best intersects with the arrival of Ahmose I of the 18th Egyptian Dynasty ca. 1570 B.C.³¹

This timing supports an early-date Exodus, placing the Israelites in Egypt during the Hyksos dynasty (ca. 1670-1550 B.C.). According to the Turin Royal Canon, the Hyksos ruled for 108 years from their capital at Avaris.³² Thus, the Hebrews' arrival in Egypt would date to approximately ca. 1661 B.C., around 7-10 years after the Hyksos had arrived. The reigns of these Hyksos rulers fit well with a 215-year sojourn whereby Joseph was made vizier by a Hyksos pharaoh, not a native Egyptian pharaoh. The Hyksos were a heterogeneous ethnic group which included Semitic/Asiatic peoples who likely migrated

from Canaan.³³ The following are only a few indicators that may support the hypothesis that the Pharaoh of Joseph's day may not have been a native Egyptian, but instead, Hyksos:

1. Most Egyptologists and experts would agree that it would be entirely unthinkable for a native Egyptian pharaoh to give up land (much less the most fertile land of the Delta) to a group of foreigners (Genesis 47:6).
2. Appointing a foreigner to rule over the land would have been a massive undermining of the priestly religious system and highly improbable. Such a promotion of a Hebrew as vizier over the whole country would legitimize Joseph's God instead of one of the many Egyptian gods.
3. If Joseph's Pharaoh was a native Egyptian, why does Scripture on four occasions emphasize that Potiphar was an Egyptian, but not Pharaoh? The Hyksos adopted Egyptian culture and incorporated the worship of Egyptian gods into their own religious beliefs alongside their chief gods Baal and Anat. The Hyksos also would have promoted native Egyptians into significant positions of authority (Genesis 39:7-20).
4. The single horse battle chariot was introduced during the Hyksos rule of Egypt.³⁴ Genesis 41:43 and 46:29 indicate Joseph rode in a chariot. If Joseph lived in the Middle Kingdom (long sojourn) this detail would seem to be an anachronism or an error.³⁵
5. Genesis 41:38-40 indicates that Pharaoh said, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" This positive statement about an outsider from the North would be wildly inconsistent with what we see later among the native 17th/18th Dynasty pharaohs like Kamose who swore to "smite" and "rip open the belly" of his Asiatic enemies to the North.³⁶
6. In Genesis 46:31-34, Joseph says to his brothers and to his father's household:

“I will go up and tell Pharaoh and will say to him, ‘My brothers and my father’s household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. And the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock, and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.’ When Pharaoh calls you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’ you shall say, ‘Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,’ in order that you may dwell in the land of Goshen, for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.”

The only logical reason as to why Joseph must coach his brothers what to say to Pharaoh was that Pharaoh was **not** an Egyptian. As the Hyksos were a Semitic people, much like the Israelites, Joseph told his father to tell the king that they were shepherds, **unlike the Egyptians**, to gain their favor.³⁷

7. In Genesis 41:41, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt.” Although the Hyksos did not rule over a unified Egypt, their influence and power extended throughout Egypt including the southern Egyptian capital of Thebes. Seventeenth Dynasty King Kamose indicates this with an inscription bemoaning taxation imposed by the “Asiatics”:

I should like to know what serves this strength of mine, when a chieftain in Avaris, and another in Kush, and I sit united with an Asiatic and a Nubian, each in possession of his slice of Egypt, and I cannot pass by him as far as Memphis... No man can settle down, when despoiled by the taxes of the Asiatics. I will grapple with him, that I may rip open his belly! My wish is

to save Egypt and to smite the Asiatic!³⁸

8. It would be entirely plausible for a Hyksos pharaoh, ruling over a divided country, to desire to consolidate the priests, whose political influence was significant. For this cause, the Pharaoh ruling over Joseph selected for him a wife, “Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On” (Genesis 41:45). Suggesting this pairing would have only been arranged by a native pharaoh of Egypt would constitute special pleading.

The Hyksos were eventually driven out of power by Ahmose I, the founder of the 18th Dynasty.³⁹ The 18th Dynasty was proud of its native Egyptian heritage and its southern (Thebes) roots and likely soon gained enough power and influence to enslave the foreign Israelites (Exodus 1:8), who did not flee from Egypt with the Hyksos (ca. 1550 B.C.), as soon as the latter had been driven out of the Delta.⁴⁰ Exodus 1:8 synchronizes perfectly with the ethnic friction between the native Egyptians and the remnant

Hyksos still resident in Northern Egypt.

A careful reading of Exodus 12:40 not only aligns the verse with other biblical and extrabiblical evidence as noted above, inferring that the sojourn in Egypt lasted 215 years, but this dating and the reign of the Hyksos also correlates well with the account of Joseph, the later enslavement of the Israelites under an Egyptian pharaoh and, ultimately, an early-date Exodus.⁴¹

[Part two of this article will appear in next month’s issue of *R&R*.]

ENDNOTES

¹ See Julius Wellhausen, Albrecht Alt, and Martin Noth for examples of textual studies of the dating of the Exodus versus William F. Albright, G. Ernest Wright, and John Garstang’s archaeological approach.

² See Ayelet Gilboa and Ilan Sharon (2003), “An Archaeological Contribution to the Early Iron Age Chronological Debate: Alternative Chronologies for Phoenicia and Their Effects on the Levant, Cyprus and Greece,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 332:7-80.

³ T. Watanabe (2001), “Doubting the Story of Exodus,” *The Los Angeles Times*, April 13.

⁴ See Christopher Eames (2022), “Searching for

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- Egypt in Israel,” <https://armstronginstitute.org/680-searching-for-egypt-in-israel>. Deuteronomy is very similar to New Kingdom suzerainty treaties common during this period.
- ⁵ James K. Hoffmeier (2007), “What is the Biblical Date of the Exodus?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 50[2]:236; Late Bronze (LB) Age I A corresponds to ca. 1446-1400 B.C. [Mount Sinai ca. 1446 B.C.; Wilderness Wanderings ca. 1446-1406 B.C.; Conquest ca. 1406-1400 B.C.]. LB II A = ca. 1400-1305; LB II B = ca. 1305-1173.
 - ⁶ Scott Stripling (2021), “The Early Date: The Exodus Took Place in the Fifteenth Century B.C.,” in *Five Views on the Exodus: Historicity, Chronology, and Theological Implications*, ed. Mark D. Janzen (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic); Andrew E. Hill (2009), “Exodus,” in *A Survey of the Old Testament*, ed. Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), p. 106.
 - ⁷ Keith Whitelam (1997), *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (Abingdon: Routledge), pp. 12-17, 22-23; Philip R. Davies (1992), “In Search of ‘Ancient Israel,’” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic), pp. 94-112.
 - ⁸ E.g., recent excavations at Gezer conducted by Ortiz have concluded that its destruction in the late 13th century should be attributed to Egyptians, most likely Pharaoh Merneptah. Merneptah may have also been involved with the destruction of Hazor’s upper city Stratum XIII (Stratum 1A in the lower city), dating to Late Bronze IIB. See Stripling, p. 32.
 - ⁹ John Bright (2000), *A History of Israel*, 4th ed. (London, UK: Westminster John Knox), pp. 21-22.
 - ¹⁰ Stripling, p. 22.
 - ¹¹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Paul D. Wegner (2017), *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars* (Nashville: B&H Academic, revised ed.), pp. 65-73.
 - ¹² E. Yamauchi’s counterapproach to modern scholars who argue against biblical history is valuable. See E. Yamauchi (1994), “The Current State of Old Testament Historiography,” in *Faith, Tradition, and History*, ed. A.R. Millard, J.K. Hoffmeier, and D.W. Baker (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns), pp. 1-36, esp. 25-36.
 - ¹³ Randall Price (1997), *The Stones Cry Out* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers), p. 46.
 - ¹⁴ Stripling, p. 29, emp. added.
 - ¹⁵ James B. Pritchard (1969), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
 - ¹⁶ Adopting the final year of Ahab’s reign as the Battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C., the start of his reign over Israel 22 years earlier could be associated with the 38th year of Judean King Asa (1 Kings 16:29). This places the start of Asa’s reign at 911 B.C., and by adding together the reigns of Asa’s predecessors—Abijam (3 years), Rehoboam (17 years), and Solomon (40 years)—the first year of Solomon’s reign can be traced back to 971 B.C. with the Temple construction beginning in Solomon’s fourth year (1 Kings 6:1)—thus, ca. 967 B.C. Edwin R. Thiele (1944), “The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 3:137-186.
 - ¹⁷ Early archaeological data corresponds with this dating including John Garstang’s (1941) excavation of Jericho during which he discovered evidence of severe destruction around 1400 B.C.
 - ¹⁸ Robert G. Boling (1975), *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday), p. 23.
 - ¹⁹ Paul J. Ray (2005), “Another Look at the Period of the Judges,” in *Beyond the Jordan*, ed. Glenn A. Carnagey, Sr. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock), pp. 93-104.
 - ²⁰ Andrew E. Steinmann (2005), “The Mysterious Numbers of the Book of Judges,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48:491-500.
 - ²¹ The LXX records the building of the Temple as happening in the 440th year following the Exodus. As a result, some, like Steven Collins, support 1406 B.C. as the date of the Exodus. Nevertheless, either date places the Exodus in the 15th century B.C. See Steven Collins (2019), *The Harvest Handbook of Bible Lands: A Panoramic Survey of the History, Geography and Culture of the Scriptures* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers), p. 89.
 - ²² James K. Hoffmeier (2021), “Late Date: A Historical Exodus in the Thirteenth Century B.C.,” in *Five Views on the Exodus: Historicity, Chronology, and Theological Implications*, ed. Mark D. Janzen (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic), p. 41.
 - ²³ Bryant G. Wood and Robert Young (2008), “A Critical Analysis of the Evidence from Ralph Hawkins for a Late-Date Exodus Conquest,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 51[2]:234, June.
 - ²⁴ David H. Van Daalen (1993), “Number Symbolism,” in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 561-563.
 - ²⁵ James K. Hoffmeier (2007), “What is the Biblical Date of the Exodus?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 50[2]:237.
 - ²⁶ Ronald Hendel (2001), “The Exodus in Biblical Memory,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 120:601-622.
 - ²⁷ See Christopher Eames (2022), “The ‘480 Years’ of 1 Kings 6:1: Just a Symbolic Number?” <https://armstronginstitute.org/762-the-480-years-of-1-kings-6-1-just-a-symbolic-number/print>.
 - ²⁸ Stripling, p. 30.
 - ²⁹ Paul’s reference to 430 years in Galatians 3:17 indicates that this sojourning period started with the covenant of Abraham, not Jacob’s arrival in Egypt.
 - ³⁰ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, II.15.2.
 - ³¹ If the sojourn of Exodus began with literal oppression in Egypt, then one should not start the 430 years of Exodus 12 until the death of Joseph (ca. 1590 B.C.). If Moses was 120 when he died, it would be a challenge for anyone to fill 430 years from this chronology. A span of 215 years in Egypt makes this scenario workable.
 - ³² Avaris was later expanded and renamed Rameses by Rameses II. Today it is called Tell el Dab’a.
 - ³³ Daniel Candelora (no date), “The Hyksos,” *American Research Center in Egypt*, <https://arce.org/resource/hyksos/>.
 - ³⁴ Roberto A. Díaz Hernández (2014), “The Role of the War Chariot in the Formation of the Egyptian Empire in the Early 18th Dynasty,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur*, 43:109-122.
 - ³⁵ See G. Cox (2022), “Shunning the Shishak/Shoshenq Synchrony?” Creation.com, <https://creation.com/shunning-shishak-shoshenq-synchrony>, where it is noted that there was not a word for chariot before the 18th Dynasty.
 - ³⁶ Alan Gardiner (1979) *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 166.
 - ³⁷ Third-century Egyptian historian Manetho identified the Hyksos as “shepherd kings” (repeated by Josephus). His claim implies a historical reality in that the Hyksos were friendly to other sheep herders like Jacob’s descendants. Scripture clearly indicates that shepherds were not an abomination to the pharaoh of Joseph’s time. See Robert Carter’s article titled, “A Response to a Long Sojourn Advocate,” at creation.com/long-sojourn-response.
 - ³⁸ Gardiner (1979), p. 166.
 - ³⁹ Candelora; see also M. Bietak (2010), “Where Did the Hyksos Come from and Where Did They Go?,” in *The Second Intermediate Period (Thirteenth-Seventeenth Dynasties): Current Research, Future Prospects*, ed. Marcel Marée, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 192 (Leuven: Peeters), pp. 139-181.
 - ⁴⁰ See H.N. Orlinsky (1960), *Ancient Israel* (New York: Cornell University Press), p. 34; Merrill Unger (1966), *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), p. 144; et al.
 - ⁴¹ See Kyle Butt (1995), “How Long was the Israelites’ Egyptian Sojourn?,” *Reason & Revelation*, 21[7]; I do not support David Rohl’s new chronology hypothesis as often quoted on this topic in various publications. Rohl’s radical new chronology places the biblical conquest in the Middle Bronze IIB period and the Amarna period contemporary with the United Monarchy. See David M. Rohl (1995), *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest* (New York: Crown Publishers); David M. Rohl (1995), “A Test of Time,” *The Bible: From Myth to History* (London: Century), 1:299-325. I agree with Wood when he notes: “Rather than enhancing the connections between archaeology and the Bible, his [Rohl’s] new chronology would destroy the many strong correlations that exist when the standard chronology is followed.” See biblearchaeology.org/research/conquest-of-canaan/3196-david-rohls-revised-egyptian-chronology-a-view-from-palestine.

Is It Ever Appropriate to Say "GOD DID IT" in Response to a Scientific Challenge?

Jeff Miller, Ph.D.



WHEN a naturalist encounters a scientific challenge he cannot explain naturally, he cannot claim a supernatural explanation to his problem without contradicting his belief in naturalism. Having examined sufficient evidence to be a supernaturalist, a biblical creationist **does** have the option of claiming a supernatural explanation, but when is it appropriate to do so?

Of course, the most obvious time that it is appropriate to say “God did it” as a response to a proposed scientific difficulty with Creation is when the Bible explicitly **says** He did something. From time to time, however, we might come across a new quibble, about which Scripture is **silent**, and to which we cannot immediately give a reasonable answer. It would be easy to respond to such quibbles by simply saying “God did it” as our answer to the problem. Such an answer, however, becomes a form of the “God of the Gaps” argument, where God is inserted to solve a problem (or as proof that God must exist in order for the problem to be solved). As we have shown elsewhere,¹ the God of the Gaps Argument is not a good argument to use in favor of God’s existence.² Quickly using “God did it” as our explanation for new quibbles could be claiming that God did things that He did not do, bearing false witness against Him (1 Corinthians 15:15; Job 13:7, ESV). It also encourages scientific laziness,

when God wants us to study to be able to find and defend the truth (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:15), including doing science and learning about the great things He has done (Psalm 111:2), only drawing conclusions that follow from the evidence we gather (1 Thessalonians 5:21). So, how should we respond to new quibbles about which Scripture is silent?

First, we should keep in mind that, regardless of the new quibble, there is no single quibble that is capable of disproving the many evidences for the existence of God or the inspiration of the Bible. Those two fundamental planks of our faith still stand on mountains of evidence,³ regardless of any new, for example, Creation or Flood quibbles. Since the Bible is inspired by God, we know that it is true, and it clearly teaches, for example, that a global Flood occurred. So, while we may not immediately have an answer to the new Flood quibble, we know that there **is** an answer. We should not, therefore, allow it to concern us. Instead, we should study the subject to learn about God and His amazing work in the Flood.

Now, it is true that God can do anything as long as it is in harmony with His perfect nature. So, sometimes the answer to an unknown quibble may be that He **did** choose to miraculously involve Himself in the process (as He did many times throughout Bible history, according to Scripture), but we should not be too quick to assume that option if

there is not scriptural evidence that would suggest it. In some biblical contexts (e.g., Genesis 1), it is clear that God is miraculously involved. So, it would be appropriate to suggest “God did it” as a possible answer to a quibble (e.g., starlight from distant stars reaching Earth rapidly during Creation week⁴).

Concerning Flood-related quibbles, one example of an important textual clue in the Flood narrative that suggests God’s miraculous involvement in the event is found in Genesis 8:1, where the text says that “God **made a wind** to pass over the earth”—suggesting that God created a wind that was not a “natural” wind during the Flood. Creation scientists and Flood critics alike have questioned how anything could have survived the Flood (creatures in the water or on the Ark) due to the amount of heat that was being generated by lava, meteorite activity, and accelerated nuclear decay. Since wind is an extremely effective way to transfer heat from an object (through convection), it is possible that the wind God made was a miraculous one that cooled the Earth during the Flood. While Creation scientists are studying other possible explanations for that particular quibble, Genesis 8:1 provides a prime example of a case where Scripture implicitly provides a Bible believer with justification for suggesting as an answer that “God did it.”

ENDNOTES

¹ Kyle Butt (2024), “The ‘God of the Gaps’ Argument: A Refutation,” *Reason & Revelation*, 44[2]:2-4, February.

² If nothing else because, as science reveals natural answers to various quibbles, God would be viewed as less and less “necessary” in the Universe.

³ See, for example, Dave Miller, ed. (2017), *Does God Exist?* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press) and Kyle Butt (2022), *Is the Bible God’s Word?* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

⁴ Jeff Miller (2019), “Does Distant Starlight Prove an Old Universe?” *Reason & Revelation*, 39[5]:58-59, May.



NOTE FROM *The Editor*



More Translated Materials Making a Difference

One of the most exciting areas of growth at Apologetics Press is the “Other Languages” section of our website. By the grace of God, precious souls around the world whose native language is not English are benefitting increasingly from AP’s free online articles, books, tracts, home study courses, etc. In the first part of 2024, we added more than 100 new articles and several more books. We now have 1,000 translated articles on our site, plus over 40 translated books.

God has blessed us richly with wonderful Christian translators around the world—from China to Honduras and from Tanzania to Russia. We are also very blessed to have Kirk Ottinger working with AP as our translation coordinator. (If you have any questions about or suggestions regarding AP’s translation work, please reach out to Kirk directly at kirk@apologeticspress.org.)

Although we currently only have one book translated into the Shona language (the first language of millions of Zimbabweans), consider how God can use “just one” to make an eternal difference in the lives of others. Last month, we received an e-mail from a kind preacher in Zimbabwe who wrote:

I found it necessary to thank you through the publication of [AP’s *The Quran Unveiled* by Dave Miller], which we were able to translate and pub-

lish in the last two years, which helps us a lot in the preaching of the gospel of Christ Jesus. We were able to advertise it through door to door evangelism. That led us to bring our brother Gilbert to the Lord after studying with him these books for a long time.... [Also], yesterday (05-06-2024)...we were able to convert and baptize one of the people we study with from the Muslim church.... May God be praised for your involvement in their work.

Nothing thrills Christians more than lost souls being saved! And there is no greater work that a Christian can do than playing a part (however so “small”) in bringing people out of darkness and false religion and into the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for helping us get the word out about the “Other Languages” section of the AP website (apologeticspress.org/other-languages/). To God be the glory!

Eric Lyons



See Center Spread for More Details